

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 07216 100932Z

ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8860

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

UNCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 7216

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KE

SUBJECT: SUCCESSION POLITICS REVERT TO BACKSTAGE MANEUVERING

REF: NAIROBI 6000

1. POLITICS OF SUCCESSION IN KENYA APPEAR TO HAVE REVERTED AT LEAST TEMPORARILY TO QUIESCENT STATE WHICH PREVAILED UNTIL LAST FALL'S EFFORT TO UNDERCUT VP MOI AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION AND REJUVENATING KANU. PERSONAL RIVALRIES WHICH BECAME SO APPARENT IN KANU ELECTION PROCESS HAVE NOT EVAPORATED. RATHER, IN ABSENCE OF A POLITICAL FORUM IN WHICH THEY CAN BE EXPRESSED, THESE RIVALRIES ARE AGAIN BEING SUBLIMATED. BITTER ATAGONISTS ARE PHPTOGRAPHED SMILING TOGETHER TO PROJECT IMAGE OF HARMONY WHICH
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PAGE 02 NAIROB 07216 100932Z

PRESIDENT KENYATTA LIKES. LOCAL PRESS HAS RECENTLY AVOIDED PARTINASHIP WHICH CHARACTRIZED REPORTING FOR SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO CANCELLATION OF KANU ELECTIONS. BUT NO ONE BELIEVES THAT ANTAGONISTS HAVE COME TO AN UNDER-
STANDING. THE QUESTION IS HOW WILL VP MOI'S POLITICAL ADVERSARIES NOW PRESS THEIR CHALLENGE TO HIS POSITION AS HEIR APPARENT.

2. VIRTUALLY NO ONE IS SANGUINE ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF KANU ELECTIONS BEING RESCHEDULED ANY TIME SOON. ACCORDING TO AN M.P. IN MOI'S CAMP, PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER MARGARET SAYS PRESIDENT BECAME FED UP WITH POLITICAL CONFLICTS THAT ELECTIONS BROUGHT OUT INTO THE OPEN. HIS ATTITUDE, MARGARET KENYATTA REPORTEDLY SAYS, IS THAT THE POLITICANS CAN FIGHT OVER KANU AFTER HE IS DEAD. OTHER OFFICIALS, INCLUDING CABINET MEMBERS, WITH WHOM EMBOFF HAVE SPOKEN AGREE THAT THERE IS NO SIGN ELECTIONS WILL BE RESCHEDULED. ISSUE WAS REPORTEDLY RAISED BRIEFLY AT LAST CABINET MEETING IN MOMBASA, BUT KENYATTA, ACCORDING TO SOURCES, CHANGED THE SUBJECT.

3. WERE ELECTIONS TO BE HELD NOW, EMBASSY'S VIEW IS THAT MOI AND HIS GROUP WOULD WIN EVEN GREATER MAJORITY THAN THEY WOULD HAVE ON APRIL 3. INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS OF KIAMBU KIKUYU INSIDERS, SUCH AS EX FONMIN MUNGAI AND GEMA HEAD KARUME, TO BRING ABOUT M.P. GEORGE ANYONA'S RELEASE FROM DETENTION HAS SERIOUSLY ERODED CREDIBILITY AMONG NON-KIKUYUS OF THIS GROUP'S INFLUENCE WITH KENYATTA WHEN CHIPS ARE DOWN (REFTEL). AND THEY REGARD ANYONA'S ARREST AS AN ISSUE ON WHICH CHIPS WERE DOWN.

4. FORTUNES OF ANTI-MOI GROUPING APPEAR TO DEPEND ON ITS ABILITY TO CREATE A NEW POLITICAL BATTLEGROUND. HAVING FAILED TO OUST MOI IN CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION CAMPAIGN IN PARLIAMENT, AND AGAIN IN KANU ELECTION CONTEXT, THERE ARE FEW OBVIOUS AVENUES LEFT FOR THEM TO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NAIROB 07216 100932Z

PRESS THEIR CHALLENGE CONSTITUTIONALLY. ONE TACTIC MIGHT INVOLVE INTENSIFIED EFFORTS TO PERSUADE KENYATTA TO TAKE DIRECT ACTION TO REMOVE MOI OR HIS ALLIES FROM THE CABINET. THUS FAR, HOWEVER, THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT THE PRESIDENT IS PREPARED TO DO ANYTHING OF THE SORT. WHAT SEEMS CLEAR IS THAT THE KIAMBU RIVALS TO MOI AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE NOT GIVING UP BUT MERELY CASTING ABOUT FOR NEW STRATEGIES.
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